THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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No. 55

RULE BRITANNIA!
Hope and Glory for Armchair Imperialists

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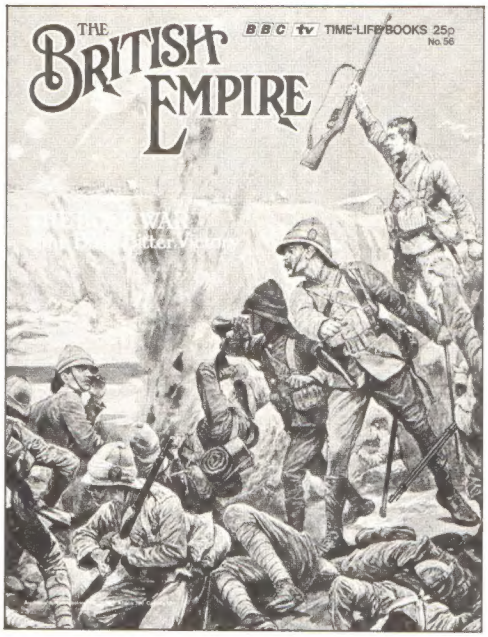

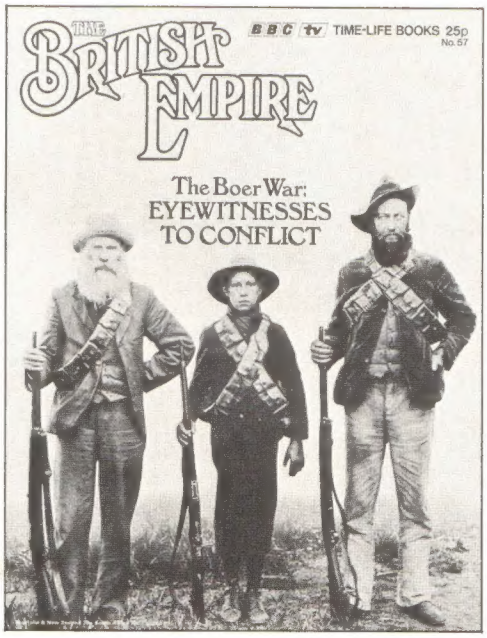

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Cover: A plump Britannia, sporting her traditional regalia and symbols of British might, adorned magazines by the score in the late 19th Century.

RULE BRITANNIA!

The groundswell of popular interest and pride in Empire which rolled over Britain towards the end of the 19th Century coincided with the advent of a new education system that immensely increased the literacy of the British public. The combination produced a great outpouring of books, plays, poems and magazines – many dealing with imperial themes – on a level the masses could understand and enjoy. Characterized chiefly by boys' adventure stories (above) and chest-pounding patriotic poetry, the literature of Empire rarely rose to the level of greatness. But its widespread popularity helped form in a generation of young readers glib, jingoistic attitudes that often endured into adult life.

By J.O.Springhall

Even at its first performance, Sir Edward Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* was welcomed ecstatically as a powerful and moving piece of music. "I shall never forget the scene," wrote Sir Henry Wood, founder of the Promenade Concerts, to the famous composer after he had first conducted the march at a "Prom" on October 23, 1901, "the people simply rose and yelled. I had to play it again – with the same result; in fact they refused to let me get on with the programme . . . merely to restore order I played the march a third time."

Even Wood, however, could not have predicted how popular the tune was soon to become. A few months later, at the suggestion of Edward VII, the melody from the march was set to words by A.C. Benson as "Land of Hope and Glory," a paean of praise – sung with enormous gusto by the famous contralto, Dame Clara Butt – for Britain and her Empire:

Wider still and wider shall they bounds be set
God who made thee mighty, make thee mightier yet.

With British imperial feeling at its turn-of-the-century zenith, the song became a second national anthem, and soon acquired a hallowed position in the last night of the "Proms" (a position it still retains to this day).

This was one of the most dramatic examples of the late 19th-Century infusion of imperial sentiment into popular culture, in which the real flavour of Empire at home is to be found: in music-hall songs, advertisements, memorials, mementoes and, more lastingly, in prose, boys' papers and verse.

Though there were historians, philosophers and politicians who propagandized on behalf of Empire, they did so mostly for the benefit of their equals and the interest of the British public as a whole for Empire was generated by an altogether less respectable branch of literature. In the popular imagination, adventure stories, most of them now unreadable, and poetry, some of it the most appalling doggerel, counted for more than academic treatises. The *Boy's Own Paper*, *Chums*, Haggard, Henty, Kipling: these were the titles and names that loomed large in the public mind at the turn of the century.

The literature of the Empire arose against a solid tradition of romantic fiction, much of it for children. This tradition, beginning with the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, was developed by Captain Frederick Marryat in his naval stories and R.M.Ballantyne, a Scottish Free Church Evangelist and one-time fur-trader, whose mid-century *Coral Island* and *Ungava* must still be in countless prep-school libraries.

The way for the novel of specifically imperial adventure was paved in 1883 by Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The tale of Long John Silver, Ben Gunn, Jim Hawkins and the rest in search of Captain Flint's pirate treasure established

The 6 foot 2 inch contralto, Clara Butt, aroused concert-goers by the thousand with her appearances as an imposing Britannia.

a vogue for a new kind of writing: the adventure novel written in easy style for boys, but also offering easy, enjoyable reading for adults.

The time was just right for this type of novel. The Education Act of 1870, which established state schools providing for children up to 13, had created a newly literate generation eager for light reading. Free municipal libraries had been set up. The result was dramatic: public library returns show that by the 1880s, when over three-quarters of the books borrowed were novels, the public seldom called on "great" authors like Henry James and Thomas Hardy, but on the "sun-drenched, blood-stained prose" of the imperial adventure writers.

Penny weekly papers and boys' magazines, too, show clearly the movement towards imperial thinking. The prime example was the *Boy's Own Paper*. Begun in 1879, it was edited by G.A.Hutchinson, who thus probably had a stronger influence on English boys than almost any other comparable figure. Until its demise in 1967, the *B.O.P.* provided entertainment and practical advice for generations of middle-class British schoolboys. In the 19th Century it was considered by parents to be "safe" reading for their boys, especially as a gift annual at Christmas: did it

Elgar conducts his "Land of Hope and Glory" at the 1924 Empire Exhibition. After 20 years of hearing the ever-popular tune, he was by then sick of it, and only played it because King George V insisted that he should.

not carry fiction and articles by clergymen, headmasters and baronets, as well as a clutch of popular authors?

One of the *B.O.P.*'s most prolific and representative contributors of the 1890s and 1900s, was Dr. William Gordon Stables, whose habit of wearing full Highland dress, complete with kilt and sporran, made him a well-known figure in Fleet Street. Stables specialized in tracing the arduous but inevitably triumphant climb of an ordinary lad to the top of his profession. He was the author of such *B.O.P.* serials as: *For England Home and Beauty*, *Frank Hardinge: Adventures from Torrid Zones to Regions of Perpetual Snow* and *From the Slums to the Quarter Deck*. Little wonder that *Punch*, in 1882, could not resist running a series of skits that parodied Stables's contributions to the *B.O.P.*, with satirical titles like: *"Wet Bob: or, The Adventures of a Little Eton Boy Amongst the Hotwhata Cannibals.* (By the author of *The Three Young Benchers and How they all Got the Woolsack, From Back Yard to Yard Arm*, etc. etc.)" Stables also wrote a regular advice column, signing it "The Captain" (also the name of a rival magazine). The column appeared to be chiefly devoted to recommending cold baths as a universal panacea.

The *B.O.P.* was the most popular of a wave of publications – including *Boys of England*, *The Union Jack*, *Sons of Britannia*, *The Young Englishman* and *The Captain* – that specialized in bloody, naturalistic and heroic tales of adventure set in the wilder parts of the British Empire. According to a survey made in 1884, out of 600 schoolboys interviewed, 400 read the *B.O.P.* as their favourite paper or magazine (next came *Tit-Bits* with only 27 votes). *B.O.P.*'s readership was thoroughly upper-middle class and public school, as was that of other boys' magazines: witness *The Captain*'s preoccupation with public school cricket, *Chums*' use of Latin phrases and the qualification to *B.O.P.*'s take-a-cold-bath advice – "Do not make more splash than you can help so as not to give the servant trouble."

In today's terms all of the boys'

continued on p. 1518

JUNE 17, 1882.] PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.

OUR BOYS' NOVELIST.

BEING STORIES OF WILD SPORT AND STIRRING ADVENTURE, FOR THE AMUSEMENT AND INSTRUCTION OF THE YOUTHS OF ALL NATIONS.

WET BOB, ON HIS WAY BACK TO ETON, SURPRISED BY THE FOREST KINGS.

WET BOB;

OR,

THE ADVENTURES OF A LITTLE ETON BOY AMONGST THE HOTWHATA CANNIBALS.

(By the Author of "The Three Young Benchers, and How they all Got the Woolsack," "From Back Yard to Yard-arm," &c., &c.)

CHAP. XXXIV.* *(Continued.)*

THE jungle grew denser at every step. Bob, however, was still heading the party; his keen, clear, penetrating youthful vision flashing sun-signals into the deepest recesses of the gloomy forest. At one time he would stir up a flock of wild mongeese; at another as suddenly bring out an opera-buffalo; and the startled creature would look for a moment as if it intended to run. But nothing ever came of it.

"It's all my eye," said Bob, and they pressed on again.

Then the Provost halted.

It was now three years since he had—when travelling in Central Africa, with a circular ticket, in search of his daughter—been captured by the Hotwhata Cannibals and forced to join their band. He had to adopt their savage dress. This, at least, was a feather in his cap.

But he determined to escape.

Tortured every morning, he was allowed the privilege of lounging about on his own hook. At last he got off it. He escaped, and here his knowledge as an Algebraist materially assisted him, as, while wandering about, he contrived to subsist on the square roots he himself extracted. Then he turned to history, and lived on dates. Such are some of the advantages of a good education! The figures came readily enough to hand, but the diet soon cost him his own.

* *Editor to Author of Wet Bob.*—The last chapter was numbered IV. Why is this XXXIV.? Some mistake?

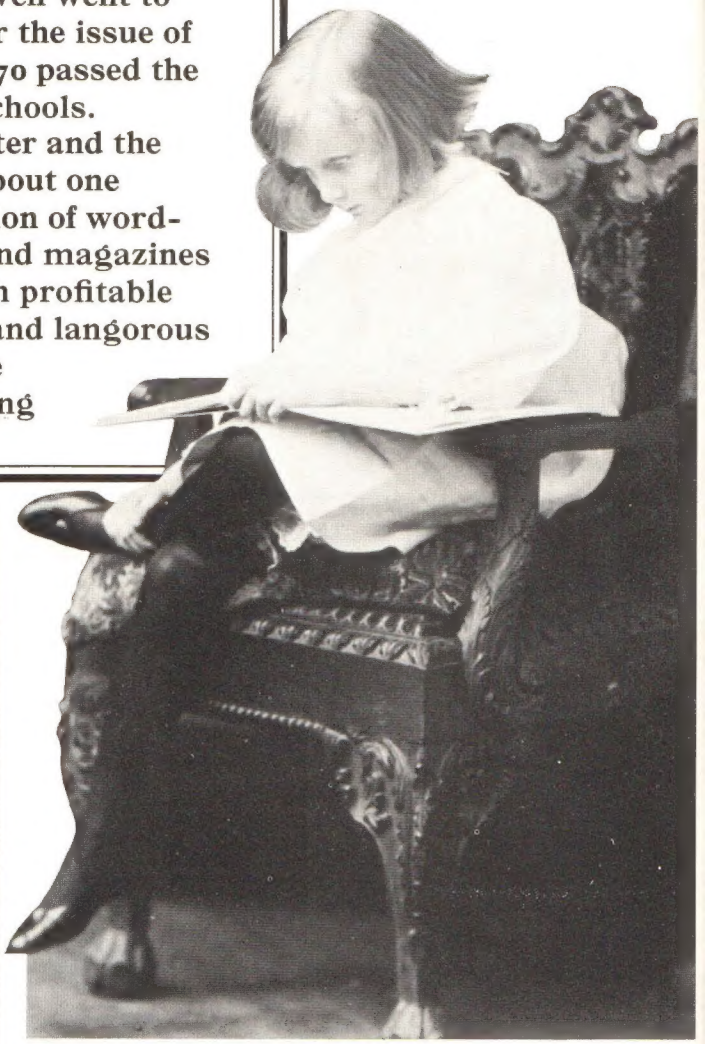
Author of Wet Bob to Editor.—All right, and no mistake. It's a sensational story calculated to make you jump. The effect was so powerful even on myself, that I jumped from IV. to XXXIV. Every nautical Novel-reader, or Skipper, will be able to understand this. I'll fill up the interval if you like. Say the word.

Editor to Author of Wet Bob.—Oh, no. Quite understand. Admirable finish! Never was so anywhere, would spoil it. Yours, enthusiastically. —Ed.

In an 1882 *Punch* satire on juvenile literature, the hero, an Eton boy, displays public school pluck to the full, thus saving himself from becoming, in an appalling pun, a "half-eaten boy."

READ, BRITANNIA!

As late as 1861, only one British child out of seven went to school. After a long, bitter debate – mainly over the issue of religious instruction – Parliament at last in 1870 passed the Elementary Education Act that created state schools. Attendance was made compulsory ten years later and the number of children in school increased from about one million to four million. Soon Britain was a nation of word-hungry readers. Publishers found that books and magazines exploiting imperial subjects were received with profitable relish. It seemed that excitable Victorian lads and langorous Victorian ladies shared a common interest: the romantic adventures of Britain's dashing, daring Empire builders.



BUFFALO BILL
BUFFALO BILL

magazines broadcasted amazingly naïve and offensive views on race. In the first volume of *Chums* (1892–93), Negroes were allowed to play only two basic roles: comic coons or screaming savages. In stories, jokes, and illustrations they were singled out for pain, death and humiliation. As Leslie Charteris, author of "The Saint" books, once exclaimed about *Chums*: "There was no sparing of violence and gore . . . what fine lusty fare it was!"

In a story about the 1865 native revolt in Jamaica, in which an unpopular overseer is boiled to death in liquid syrup by his slaves, the rebels are referred to as a "disorderly crowd of niggers," "black savages" and "inhuman brutes" full of "savage exultation" and with "demoniacal countenances."

In *The Captain* for 1904–5 there is a Tom Browne cartoon of an indignant, sun-helmeted sportsman, complete with military-style moustache who, having fired his rifle at a "comic coon" figure clutching his rear, exclaims sorrowfully, "Now, isn't that irritating? I've fired my last cartridge, and it isn't a buck after all." Title of the cartoon: "It was Sambo!"

But this treatment was not reserved for Africans alone. Chinese were also favourite subjects of racial stereotype: stock figures for brutal, sadistic treatment at the hands of English public schoolboys, "reptiles" who are often strung up by their pigtails.

Racism was never far below the surface of British imperial feeling. These sentiments could not be termed consciously vindictive: they were more a reflection of a common attitude, attempts to express differences of culture and colour in terms that had been unquestioned for generations. But they must nevertheless have had an effect; who can say to what extent the *B.O.P.* and its rivals, by shaping and romanticizing racial sentiments, formed lasting racialist attitudes in their unsophisticated schoolboy audience?

The growing Victorian public schoolboy would probably, after abandoning the *B.O.P.*, have graduated to the two supreme imperialist novelists, Rider Haggard and G.A. Henty. The South African novelist, Stuart Cloete, said of them both: "they were the literary milk of my boyhood from which I have never been weaned." Henry Miller also acknowledges Henty and Haggard as being two of the most formative influences of his boyhood in *The Books in My Life*.

Though the two are often mentioned in the same breath, Haggard's books are the richer and more complex. Haggard, for instance, had a deep knowledge of Zulu history and folklore, which he acquired from his career as a colonial civil servant in South Africa. While serving on the staff of the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal in 1875, Haggard met the wise old warrior, with his famous axe "Groanmaker," who served as a model for Umslopogaas in many of his Zulu romances. From this man, the writer heard tales of the Zulu chiefs Shaka and Dingaan; of war between the Zulus and the Swazis; of witchcrafts; and of the intrigues and murders of the Zulu Royal House. These stories he later incorporated into adventures like *Nada the Lily*, which one critic has called "unquestionably the bloodiest book in the world."

In 1876 Haggard was transferred to the staff of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Special Commissioner for the Transvaal, and took part in the historic mission that led to that territory's annexation by Britain in 1877. The future author was selected to run up the Union Jack at the official annexation ceremony in Pretoria, a scene that he was later to describe in *Finished*, his novel of the Zulu chief Cetewayo.

After the Zulu War of 1879 and the British defeat by the Boers at Majuba

Wherever the sun never set, the heroes of *Chums* magazine fought fearful odds and displayed true British grit. In Canada,

"In the Enemy's Grip"

"On Death's Threshold"

"In the Nick of Time"

Hill in the war of 1881, Haggard decided to leave Natal, where he had taken up ostrich farming, and return to England to pursue a legal career. His version of the events leading up to these wars – which is highly critical of the Gladstone government's abandonment of the Transvaal to the despised Boers – can be found in his first book, *Cetewayo and his White Neighbours*, published partly at his own expense in 1882. He followed this with two old-fashioned, solidly mid-Victorian three-decker novels: *Dawn* and *The Witch's Head*, both semi-autobiographical tales of country life in Norfolk showing considerable narrative skill but little talent for characterization. In view of his future success, it is noteworthy that only during the scenes set in Africa does *The Witch's Head* really come alive.

In 1885, Haggard, then 28, was called to the Bar and went to London. Soon afterwards, on a train journey, he suggested to one of his brothers that Stevenson's *Treasure Island* did not deserve the high praise it had received. His brother promptly offered to bet him a shilling that he could not do anything as good himself. Rider took the wager and that very evening sat down and began to write a tale of adventure for boys. He completed it in six weeks, drawing upon his African experiences to avoid direct imitation of Stevenson. When *King Solomon's Mines* was published in 1885, Haggard's fortune was made: more than 650,000 copies in one form or another were printed in his lifetime. Before the year was out he finished two more novels, *Allan Quatermain* and *Jess*. *She* soon followed.

King Solomon's Mines is an astonishing adventure story. The first to exploit an African setting, it has excitement, suspense and massacres on almost every page. The heroic tale it told of Allan Quatermain, Sir Henry Curtis, Captain John Good and the mysterious witch, Gagool, had a huge appeal. It enchanted and thrilled critics and readers alike. Graham Greene said of it: "wasn't it the incurable fascination of Gagool . . . that led me to work all through 1942 in a little stuffy office in Freetown, Sierra Leone [the setting of his novel *A Burnt-Out Case*]?"

In 1887 *She* was published and, if anything, was even more successful with the reading public: it has never been out of print since it first appeared and several film versions have been made. Speculation upon the allegorical, Freudian, Jungian or even Christian message of *She* continues unabated. But theories of hidden meanings are irrelevant to its success: in the glamorous, supernatural person of Ayesha, the mysterious white Queen of a savage race of black Africans, Haggard had found a convenient symbol through which to express his occasionally banal thoughts about Life, Death, Love and Immortality. Exoticism allied to mysticism proved to be a most telling literary formula for financial success.

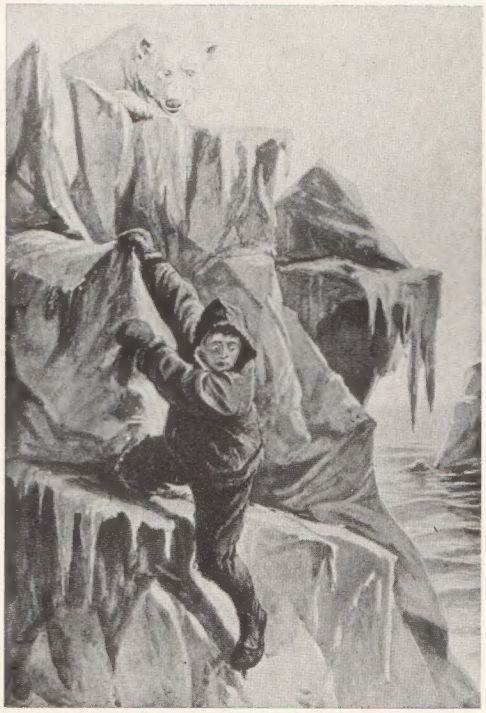
Turning out tales of adventure at the rate of one or two every year, Haggard offered mass entertainment in an age without television or cinema. Although his writing was often shoddy and his sentences frequently convoluted or ungrammatical, the spiteful attacks of London literary critics had little effect on his sales, which continued to spiral throughout the 1890s.

Haggard was heavily influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution but not in a glib way. Unlike many of his contemporaries (including Henty), he did not deduce from Darwin's theory that the British were racially superior simply because they were politically dominant. For him, different races – European, African, Chinese – could each be superior in their own way and he often lauds the achievements and potential of African

Africa, or the Frozen North, man, beast and climate were never a match for the pluck and wit of an English schoolboy.

continued on p. 1522

"In the Hands of the Enemy"

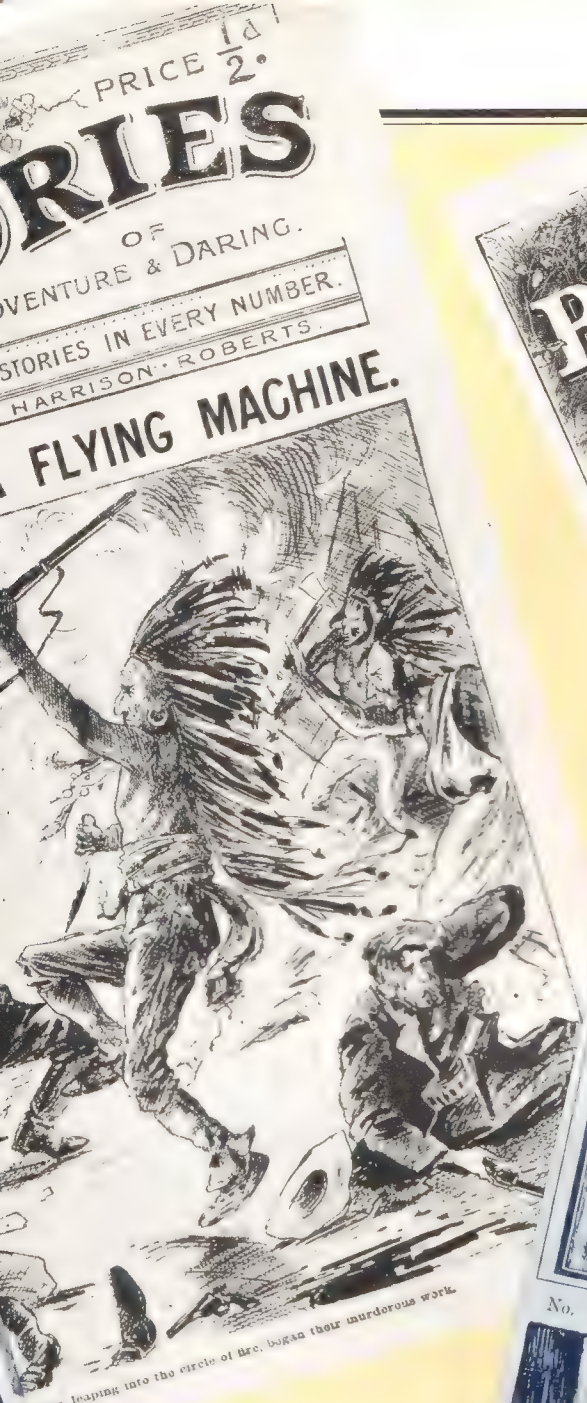


"A Perilous Dilemma"

"Not Dead Yet"

BOYS' OWN PAPERS

"You need not be ashamed to be seen reading this," a new magazine for boys declared in its first issue. Such assurance was welcomed by Victorian parents, fearful that their sons would otherwise be ruined by the copious blood and gore from cheap, sensational publications known as "penny dreadfuls." The new genre, begun by *Boy's Own Paper* (upper right) in 1879, won parental approval with emphasis on sport (the famous cricketer C.B. Fry wrote for *The Captain*, below), public school morality and patriotism. "Pure, healthy tales," promised one, "No boys rifling their employers' cash boxes and making off to foreign lands." But, however "pure" the themes, the subject-matter was not: publishers still depended on exotic settings and violence, as the covers on this page show, to keep up their healthy circulations.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dians, leaping into the circle of fire, began their murderous work.

THE
BOY'S OWN PAPER
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1879
Price One Penny.
[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.]
No. 3. Vol. I
MY STRUGGLE WITH A TIGER.
By Charles Jamrach,
St. George's-in-the-East.
It is now a good many years ago, when one morning a van-load of wild beasts, which I had bought the previous day from a captain in the London Docks, who brought them from the East Indies, arrived at my repository in Bett Street, St. George's-in-the-East. I myself superintended the unloading of the animals, and had given directions to my men to place a den containing a very ferocious full grown Bengal tiger, with its iron-barred front close against the wall.
They were proceeding to take down a den with leopards, when all of a sudden I heard a crash, and to my horror found the big tiger had pushed out the back part of his den with his hind-quarters, and was walking down the yard into the street, which was then full of people watching the arrival of this curious merchandise. The tiger, in putting his forepaws against the iron bars in front of the den, had exerted his full strength to push with his back against the boards behind, and had thus succeeded in gaining his liberty.
As soon as he got into the street, a boy of about nine years of age put out his hand to stroke the beast's back, when the tiger seized him by the shoulder and run down the street with the lad hanging in his jaws. This was done in less time than it takes me to relate; but when I saw the boy being carried off in this manner, and witnessed the panic that had seized hold of the people, without further thought I dashed after the brute, and got hold of him by the loose skin of the back of his neck. I was then of a more vigorous frame than now, and had plenty of pluck and dash in me.
I tried thus to stop his further progress, but he was too strong for me, and dragged

PRICE ONE PENNY.]
STORIES OF REGIMENTAL PETS.
CHUMS
No. 104.—Vol. III.]
SEPTEMBER 5, 1894.
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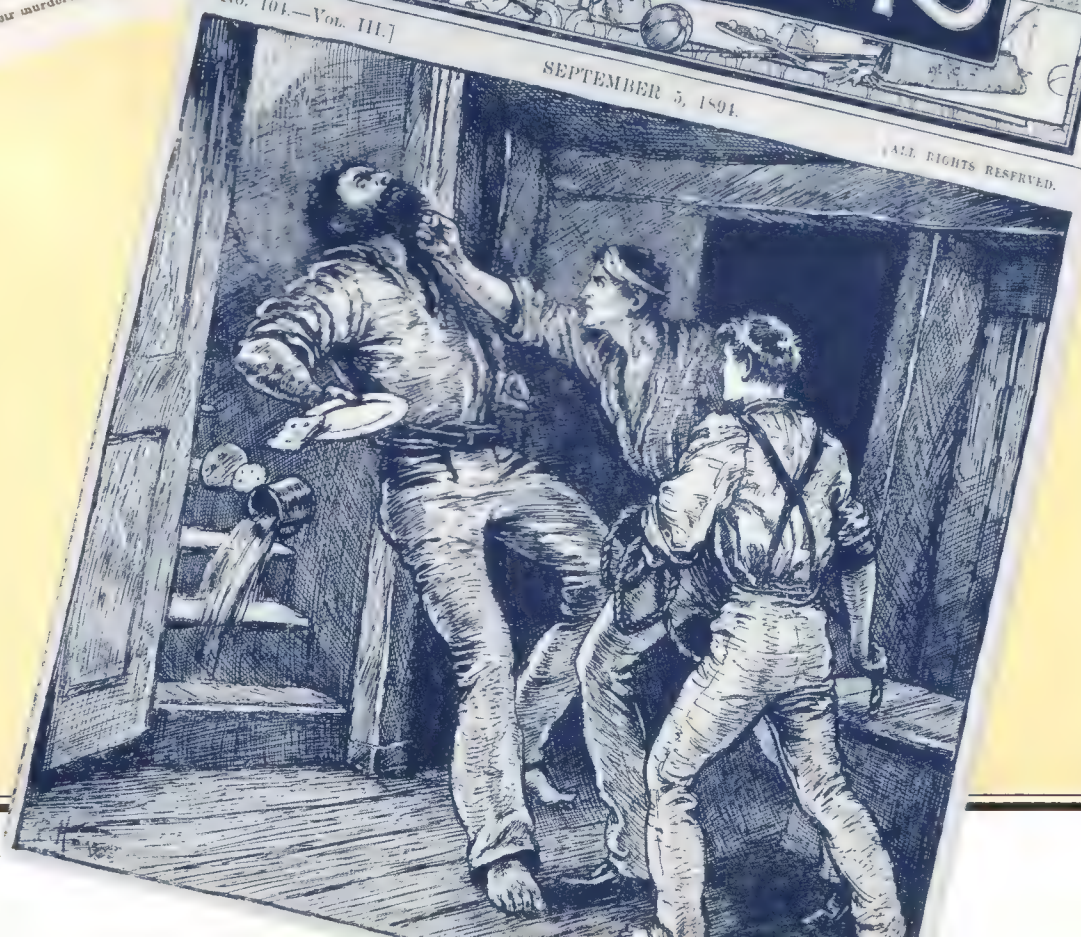

society to the detriment of Western civilization.

In *King Solomon's Mines*, the Zulus often hold the centre of the stage: they are not presented merely as a colourful native background to the adventures of a band of hearty Victorian imperialists. In *Marie, Child of Storm, Nada the Lily* and the African parts of *The Witch's Head*, the cultural identity and the point of view is as much that of the Zulu warrior as of the white man. In the draft dedication to *Child of Storm*, Haggard claimed that he sought to write of the Zulus "as a reigning nation, which now they have ceased to be, and to try to show them as they were in all their superstitious madness and blood-stained grandeur."

Mad and bloody they may have been, but their civilization had other values that compared favourably with those of the West. Haggard often pronounced the simple equations that "savages are more civilized than whites" or that "civilization is only savagery silver-gilt."

Through his novels, Haggard questions the alleged moral superiority of European over Zulu social and military organization. As Umslopogaas tells Allan Quatermain, in reply to an accusation of blood-lust, "better it is to slay a man in fair fight than to suck out his heart's blood in buying and selling and usury after your white fashion." At the end of *Allan Quatermain* Sir Henry Curtis takes the decision to maintain the isolation of the tribe from white influence, for to do otherwise would be to "endow it with the greed, drunkenness, new diseases, gunpowder and general demoralization which chiefly marks the progress of civilization amongst unsophisticated peoples."

It is difficult, however, to completely exculpate Rider Haggard from the charge made against him by contemporaries of over-stressing the violence in his novels. One criticism in *The Quarterly Review* in 1891 accused him of turning "the civilized drawing room" into "a menagerie" with his pages "reeking of blood and barbarism." In 1892 the *Pall Mall Budget* wrote off *Nada the Lily* as "drenched, sodden, dripping with blood." There are indeed gory passages galore: arms severed from bodies, blood gushing from arteries, battles without quarter and beheadings. Haggard counter-attacked by demanding whether it was "not better to write of hard, clean honest fighting than, for instance, of treacherous and sickening murder." What he personally deemed undesirable were "the tales of lust, crime and moral perversion with which the bookstalls are strewn by dozens." This seems a fairly specious excuse, especially given the extent to which bloody deeds sold his books, but his moral stance was undoubtedly sincere, as was apparent in his belief in the value of British rule, if it was correctly administered.

In this, he was at one with his friend, Rudyard Kipling. Rider Haggard's friendship with Kipling, confirmed by their common belief in England's civilizing mission and a shared interest in rural England, often led to a degree of informal collaboration and consultation unique in English literature. Both were members of the respectable, Establishment Savile Club, which set them apart from those literary figures – like Henty – who belonged to the Savage, a club for "bohemian" journalists, war correspondents, cartoonists and artists.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* first appeared in a boys' magazine.

R.M. Ballantyne's stories remained popular despite their moralizing, religious tone.

Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, defended Britain's Boer War policies.

In the course of their long association, Haggard would often visit Kipling's home, "Bateman's" near Burwash, in Sussex, where he was given considerable help in plotting at least three of his tales: *The Ghost Kings, Red Eve* and *Allan and the Ice Gods*, while Kipling also read and commented on several stories in manuscript form for his old friend. Their rapport was so close that they would often work in each other's company and consult each other about their literary and domestic problems. United by the gift of imagination, they shared a common vision of the British Empire which cemented their friendship and found expression in their works.

Haggard's determination to propagandize the imperial mission comes through strongly both in his chief hero, Allan Quatermain, and in his subject-matter. Out of a total of 58 volumes of fiction, Allan Quatermain appears in 18. Allan Quatermain is the Englishman of Empire, the imperial crusader carrying the White Man's Burden of Anglo-Saxon justice to the far corners of the earth. Through him, Haggard cast the medieval romances of Sir Walter Scott in an imperial Victorian mould. In so doing, he inaugurated a new school of romantic fiction – represented by almost forgotten writers like Stanley Weyman, Anthony Hope, Henry Seton Merriman, A.E.W. Mason – that flourished in the 1890s.

By propagating a concept of adventure inextricably tied to the Dark Continent, Haggard helped cloak British imperialism in Africa with imaginative innocence. The summoning up of the spirit of adventure in the service of Empire proved a powerful instrument in spreading imperialist doctrines to the young.

George Alfred Henty's appeal, unlike that of his contemporary Rider Haggard, was almost entirely restricted to a juvenile audience. Henty's major claim to attention, despite several traditional two- or three-volume novels with titles like *The Curse of Carne's Hold* and *Colonel Thorndyke's Secret*, rests upon the 80-odd historical adventure stories he wrote for boys. About a quarter of these deal with the British Empire, for he found that his novels dealing with ancient history, such as *Beric the Briton* or *The Cat of Bubastes*, did not sell at all well. His audience wanted to read about colonial military campaigns set in a fictional framework of narrow escapes and rousing fights. Boys, he concluded, "seem to like stories dealing with nineteenth century wars better than tales about ancient battles fought long ago in B.C. or something." And again: "An English boy of today says 'Give me "Bobs" or "Kitchener" or good old "Buller".' Books dealing with these heroes, modern and right-up-to-date are always sure of selling." Consequently, Henty wrote a series of books almost concurrently with the events that inspired them: *With Buller in Natal* (1901), *With Roberts to Pretoria* (1902) and *With Kitchener in the Soudan* (1903). Even when his tales do not deal with specific events, his books – with such stirring titles as: *In Times of Peril, The Bravest of the Brave, True to the Old Flag, For Name and Fame* and *Held Fast for England* – are on imperial themes.

Henty was born in 1832 at Trumpington, near Cambridge. He was the eldest son of a stockbroking mine-owner, which might account for an antipathy to trade

The Savage Club, a haunt for war correspondents and other writers, entertained heroes like Kitchener and was a source of literary support for British imperial policies.

unions evident in his fiction. Until he was 14 he was almost permanently an invalid; he was a very sickly child and spent much of his time in bed suffering from rheumatic fever. So weak was he at one stage that a doctor warned his nurses not to allow him to handle pins, forks or any sharp instruments in case he pricked himself and bled to death! This childhood presents a strange contrast with – and clear explanation for – the athleticism of his "manly" boy heroes.

Henty went to Westminster School, where he was bullied for writing poetry until he took boxing lessons, and then, still a walking skeleton of nine and a half stone, to Caius College, Cambridge, which he left in 1855 to serve in the Crimean War, as a member of the Army Hospital Commissariat on the Purveyor's Staff.

While in the Crimea, he acted briefly as a special correspondent for the *Morning Advertiser* and, after resigning his commission in the army, decided in 1865 to become a full-time journalist. He joined the *Standard*, and during the following decade or so, reported on most of the major colonial and European wars.

As a result of his active life, his health had improved dramatically. He had become tall, barrel-chested, with immensely broad shoulders, sported a full beard in the fashion adopted by the famous cricketer, W.G.Grace, and wore a military coat after the style worn during the Crimean War. When he returned to annual reunion dinners at his old Cambridge college, his contemporaries often failed to recognize in this burly figure the puny Henty of only a few years before.

Henty's books for boys both shaped and reflected a certain type of military response towards the British Empire. With their stereotyped heroes and mechanical plots, Henty believed that his books helped to foster in the young "the imperial spirit": a combination of the will to rule, heroism and the moral code of the British Christian gentleman.

Indeed, if popularity is any guide, his books accomplished the author's purpose. According to one of his publishers, for many years Henty's books enjoyed a circulation of from 150,000 to 250,000 copies a year in Britain and 50,000 in America. By the 1890s, Henty dominated

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Stifled by Yorkshire's calm and safety, the English adventurers plot an African expedition.

"The great Zulu springs," adding another corpse to the hundreds that pile up in the novel.

Haggard's work is characterized by his caption for this illustration: "Into the unknown."

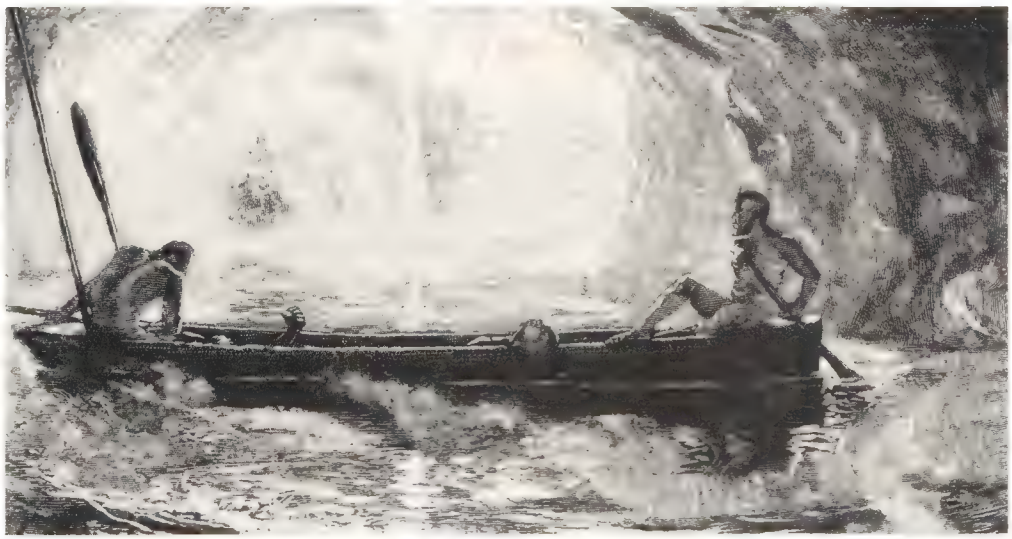
"Into the Unknown" with Rider Haggard

In an era when parts of Africa seemed more remote than other planets seem today, Sir Henry Rider Haggard became a master of geographical science fiction. When his heroes abandoned their cosy English firesides to seek adventure – as in these illustrations from his novel *Allan Quatermain* – they set off for places where "no white man has to the best of my belief ever been." Haggard's vivid imagination filled these conveniently blank spaces on the map of the Dark Continent with astonishing natural wonders and equally amazing people, such as the mysterious white civilization of Zu-Vendi discovered by Quatermain and his companions. His readers – like modern science fiction fans speculating about life on other worlds – knew that no one could say it was not true.

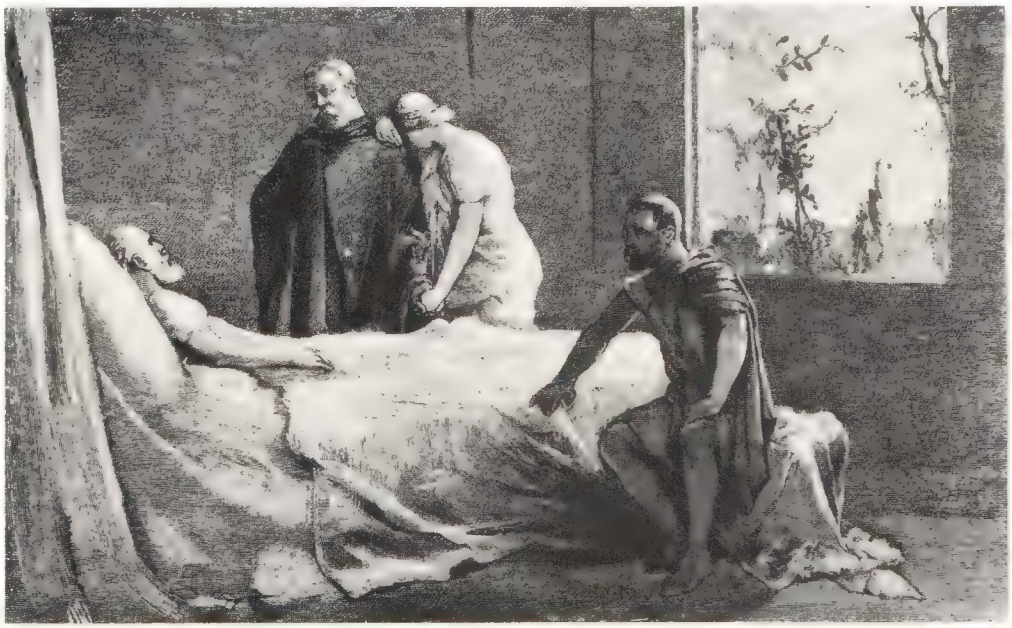
Haggard did not cater particularly to the schoolboy market. The title character in *Quatermain* is an old man, and much of the plot pivots on a love affair between one of the English explorers and a queen of the Zu-Vendi. While Victorian *mores* confined sexuality to the implicit, no such strictures applied to violence, and Haggard's devotees had plenty of near-surgical detail to savour: "Umslopogaas . . . brought the broad blade down with such fearful force . . . just where the neck is set into the frame, that its razor edge shore right through bone and flesh and muscle, almost severing the head and one arm from the body."

Amid the excitment the author often slipped a social message: he noted that Zu-Vendi law valued people more highly than property while the opposite was true of "our civilised law . . . as becomes a people whose ruling passion is money."

Quatermain's Zulu friend, Umslopogaas, sacrifices his life to save the Englishman.



Typical of Haggard's imaginary settings, this underground river flows through a volcano.



"God bless you all," sighs the dying Quatermain to English friends in exotic Zu-Vendi dress.

the field of juvenile literature: school libraries limited boys to three Hentys a week, so popular had they become. In 1900, a librarian claimed that "boys, when they reach the Henty stage, discriminate to the extent of rejecting almost every other author."

The tradition of "manliness" that Henty disseminated through his novels was a reaction against an earlier tradition in children's fictional heroes: that of the priggish moralists, they who filled the intervals between bouts of action with pious sentiments that Henty and his school abhorred. Typical of this school was R.M. Ballantyne, the author of *Coral Island* whose fictional heroes frequently turned to God and Mother in their hour of peril, as this extract from his *The Young Fur Traders* of 1856 indicates: "My heart sank within me; but at that moment my thoughts turned to my beloved mother, and I remembered those words, which were among the last thing she said to me: 'Ralph, my dearest child, always remember in the hour of danger to look to your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He alone is both able and willing to save your body and your soul!' So I felt much comforted."

A Henty hero in a similar situation would have been more concerned with practical measures to avert danger rather than in requesting heavenly assistance. Henty himself believed that Ballantyne spoiled his books by "putting in too much religion." Although Henty confessed himself "a warm upholder of the Anglican Church," he believed that "a book for boys should possess plenty of good, stirring adventures, without any preaching. . . . You don't want any bosh about love or sentiment in boys' books."

Henty's main characters possessed all the idealized middle-class Victorian virtues, only he made them more British, more conscious of the might of the British Empire that they served and that, to a certain extent, replaced the Kingdom of Heaven in their emotions. In Henty's moral universe, "the Negro is an inferior animal and a lower grade in creation than the white man." The white man therefore treats Africans as having the intelligence of European children.

Much of the growing enthusiasm for

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Henty's Adventurers in Historyland

George Alfred Henty, an ex-war correspondent, mixed fiction with his journalistic interest in facts and with the combination built a prodigiously prolific literary career. His books, *The Times* said, amounted to "a continuous history of all the wars in which England has engaged since the Revolution." Into a background of real events and characters – famous soldiers found themselves speaking fictional dialogue in his pages – Henty introduced his youthful heroes, who, observed *The Times*, "eclipsed the paladins in their deeds of daring, gave grave statesmen a lead in complex politics, and inspired the strategy of experienced generals."

They were also, it might be added, virtually ubiquitous. Ned and Dick Warrener, the teenaged protagonists of *In Times of Peril* (from which these illustrations were taken), participated – indeed, played crucial roles – in almost every major event of the Indian Mutiny from the siege of Delhi to the relief of Lucknow, only escaping the massacre of Cawnpore by swimming along the Ganges dodging bullets for 70 miles or so. Disguised as Indians, they slipped through enemy lines almost at will, undertaking, often on their own initiative, incredibly dangerous missions which usually made it easier for the real-life soldiers in the book to accomplish their own, historically recorded deeds. (When the boys spike an enemy battery at Lucknow, General John Inglis, who actually commanded there, calls for "three cheers for our gallant young friends.")

His success was prodigious: *The Times* noted on his death "no books have been so . . . gladly welcomed by boys."

Henty's books were rich with specific detail of colonial life – in this instance, the popular sport of "pig-sticking" in India.

Henty used both the Cawnpore massacre (above) and English ferociousness at Delhi (below) as the background to deeds of daring.

Henty in the late Victorian period can be attributed, one suspects, to his belief – common among juvenile authors of the 19th Century – that goodness and power were symbolized by the might of the British Empire. Both Henty and his literary predecessors bowed down before the imperial majesty of the British Raj. They were enthusiastic believers in the divine mission of the British race to civilize and govern native races given, according to Henty, "the utter incapacity of the Negro race to evolve, or even maintain, civilization without the example and the curb of a white population."

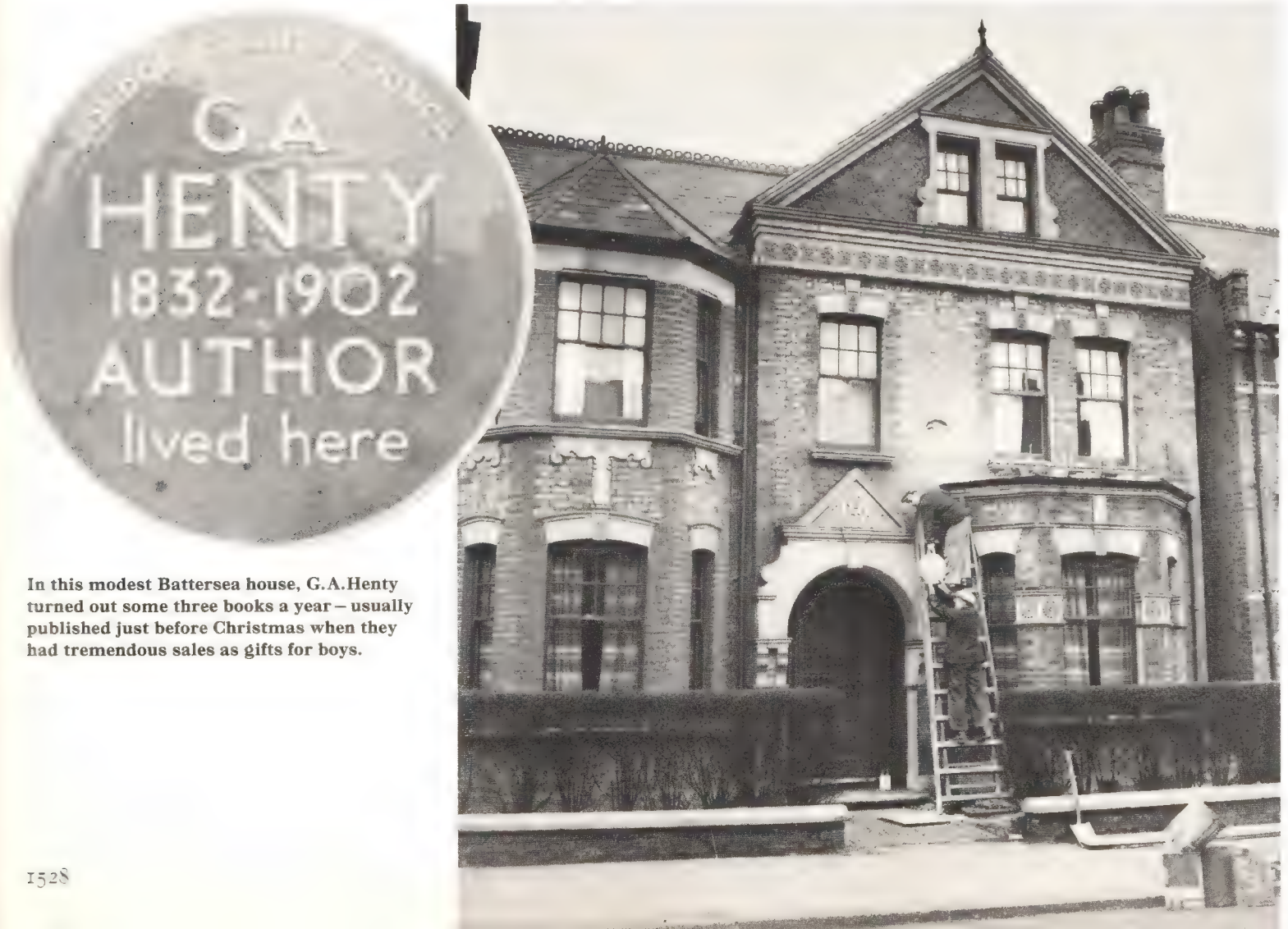
Such views were widespread. Henty, however, provided a contribution to the mythology of the British Empire that was very much his own: the bovine public schoolboy hero. By creating a romantic image of imperial warfare he helped to make imperialism more glamorous to the young, drawing on the war-correspondent imagery that he used as an army camp-follower. The Henty hero is the product of an assembly-line process that produced characters like Yorke Harberton, a "typical public school boy," who had the good fortune to go *With Roberts to Pretoria*. He was above all else: "a good specimen of the class by which Britain has been built up, her colonies formed, and her battle-fields won – a class in point of energy, fearlessness, and the spirit of adventure, and a readiness to face and overcome all difficulties unmatched in the world."

In many ways, Henty's idealized public school heroes derive from the public school cult that was replacing devotional religion and scholarship – on which Arnold of Rugby had insisted – with athleticism, self-discipline and the exercise of self-confident authority – qualities summed up by the word "character" – in the public schools. In recommendations on behalf of candidates for the Colonial Service, the "perfect gentleman" with public school experience as a prefect was considered ideal material.

The code of the "open-air life," was religiously promulgated by Henty until one could almost believe that it was the Englishman's love of outdoor exercise that had won him the Empire. As a result, Henty's "manly" heroes have no real personalities. They are a kind of abstraction of the virtues of the Victorian belief in "character."

The possession of "character" was enough to carry most juvenile heroes to success in the great imperial game of life. In the many novels about the Boer War – including Henty's – leadership shown by a boy in his school games would successfully carry him through a military campaign. Henty's Charlie Marryat, who went *With Clive to India*, is a good exemplar of both "muscular Christianity" and the public school ethic. Despite his slight build, "his muscles were as firm and hard as those of any boy in the school"; he was a good swimmer and one of the best boxers in the school; a born leader, but also "honourable" and "manly" in that he "would scorn to shelter himself under the semblance of a lie, and was a prime favourite with his masters as well as his schoolfellows."

Henty's fiction strongly propagated the public school code of behaviour to a non-élitist readership – an extension of the broadly indoctrinating process undertaken by the public schools themselves – aiding these institutions in consciously



In this modest Battersea house, G.A.Henty turned out some three books a year – usually published just before Christmas when they had tremendous sales as gifts for boys.

and unconsciously inculcating the values and attitudes that built, maintained and survived a great overseas empire.

Despite the popularity of the low-grade works produced by Haggard and Henty, the British Empire could occasionally be the setting for literary creations of real insight and imagination. This is most evident in the case of Rudyard Kipling. A teller of tales, an author of popular ballads and one of Britain's great verse-writers, as well as being a popular children's writer, Kipling, once tarred with the Henty-Haggard brush, has now re-emerged as a major artist.

Kipling was born in Bombay in 1865, where his father was a Professor of Architectural Sculpture, but – like most Anglo-Indian children – he was sent back to England for education at the United Services College. As a young man, he had worked in the 1880s on Anglo-Indian newspapers at Lahore, Simla and Allahabad. In 1888 he published *Plain Tales From the Hills* which, together with stories written to inaugurate the Indian Railway Library, established his reputation as a writer on the British in India. In *Kim*, written over a decade after he had left India, Kipling tellingly displayed his fascination with the multitudinous variety of races, creeds and religions scattered over the Indian subcontinent.

Kipling's ballads, too, brought him immense fame. His *Barrack Room Ballads*, which owe much in technique and content to music-hall songs, were published when Kipling was only 23, and made him the most talked-about figure on the London literary scene. In 1897, having spent four years in America, Kipling settled down in his beloved Sussex. Apart from the Boer War, the seminal experiences that were to determine the shape of his art were already in the past. He was only 32.

For Kipling, the Empire brought with it moral responsibility as well as an awareness of grandeur and achievement. The concept of the sense of responsibility and its values are served up by Kipling in his concept of "The Law." The Law is central to nearly everything he wrote and the key to an understanding of his imperialism. The concept implied a certain code of conduct and a hierarchy of values transcending individual cultures, that the British were expected to adhere to. Set out in the poem "McAndrew's Hymn" (1893) the code, within a generalized Christian framework, involved Law, Order, Duty, Restraint, Obedience and Discipline. The forces of social control imposed a code of behaviour: a standard of conduct that the administrative class in India, which Kipling so much admired, was expected to uphold in order to sustain its moral integrity in an unceasing conflict with the alien environment.

By immersing himself in the present actuality of work, the Indian civil servant staved off loneliness and home-sickness. But the Calvinistic ethic of work was insufficient on its own: Kipling also felt the need to be an "insider," to belong to an élite with all its rituals and ceremonies. This Kipling found both in Anglo-Indian society and in Freemasonry.

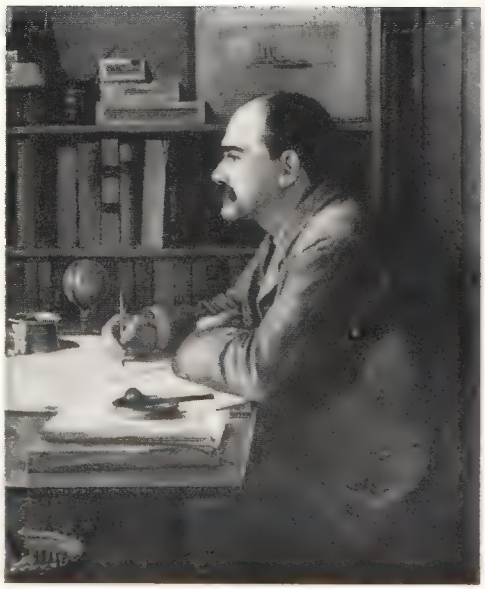
The Law also symbolized the hope of a better arrangement of life for the subjects of the British Empire, to be brought about through the paternalistic instrument of imperialism. The Law thus provided Kipling with an outlet for his moralizing side, especially in the *Jungle Books* and *Puck of Pook's Hill*. (It was even given human form in Baden-Powell's Cub Scouts, consciously modelled on the Mowgli stories.)

The benefits of The Law for the lonely subjects of the Empire – using Kipling's irritating habit of personifying by capital letters to lend additional weight – were Peace, Order and Public Works (the fruits of imperial rule in India). Progress and Civilization followed in their wake as a natural corollary of imperialism.

Kipling's command to the imperialists, as he put it in "A Song of the English" in 1893, was quite simple:

Keep ye the Law – be swift in all obedience –
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown;
By the peace among Our peoples let men know we serve the Lord!

This was Kipling's conception of Britain's imperial role: clearing the land of evil, driving the roads and bridging the fords. The men who obeyed The Law in whatever age, engineers, railway-builders, administrators – the "doers" – were the men who compelled Kipling's admiration: whether a Roman officer on Hadrian's Wall, a marine engineer responsible for the entire running of the ship's engines, the commandant of a gunboat on a West African river or an Indian civil servant preventing famine or disease in his native district.



Kipling was often called "the unofficial poet laureate" after declining the post officially.

From being one of the finest and earliest short-story writers about Anglo-Indian life, Kipling developed into a prophet of imperialism. But his imperialism is highly moral and should not be lightly dismissed. Kipling preached the doctrines of imperialism in the interests of good government. The oft-quoted "Recessional" (1897) urges a Britain "drunk with sight of power" that holds domain "over palm and pine" to be careful lest, without adherence to The Law, "all our pomp of yesterday" becomes "one with Nineveh and Tyre!" The famous reference to "lesser breeds without the Law" draws a distinction between those imperial nations who submit in all humility to The Law and those more arrogant "breeds," like the Belgians in the Congo, who refused to observe its imperative demands and are thus outside the pale of civilization.

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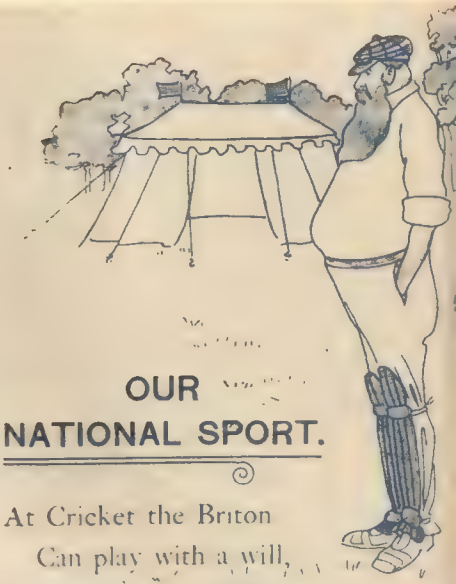
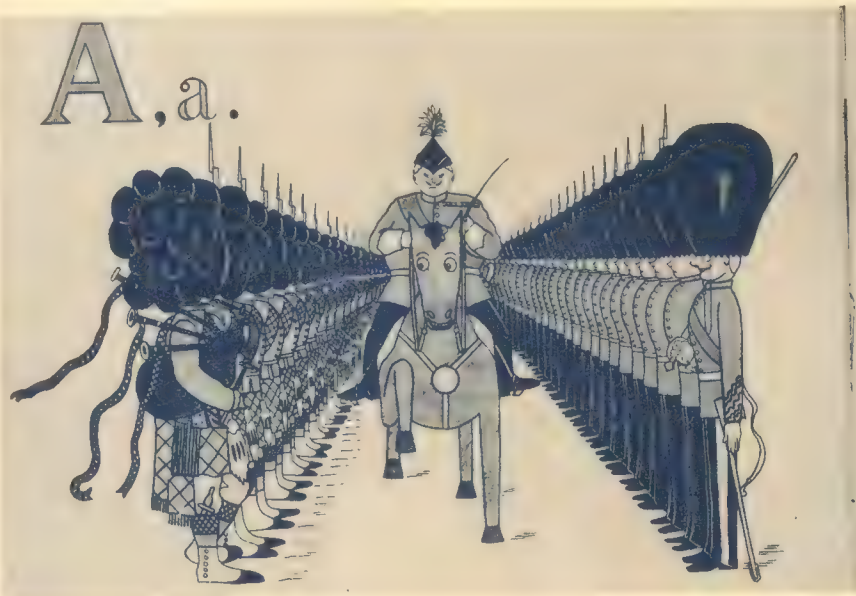
SONGS FOR LITTLE ENGLANDERS

The late Victorian mania for imperial themes even invaded the nursery. In books like *ABC for Baby Patriots* and *Pictures for Little Englanders*, pages from which are shown here, the traditional "A was an archer who shot at a frog" gave way to "the Army that dies for the Queen," a more pertinent mnemonic for future Empire builders. In some middle-class homes, where mother's appearance at nursery tea was a rare and memorable event, this nationalistic propaganda may have provided a sense of belonging children could not derive from their remote parents. Certainly, it helped give a generation of Britons a national superiority complex and instilled a contempt for foreigners, caricatured here as cringing before England's naval power. Infant racialism, too, was cheerfully encouraged by children's literature, as in a poem which noted with surprise that little Africans could be happy "Although they are so black/So very, very black."



OUR NATIONAL SPORT.

At Cricket the Briton
Can play with a will,
And welcome such heroes
As Grace, Ranji, and Hill.



A, a.

A a. *A a.*

A is the Army
That dies for the Queen:
It's the very best Army
That ever was seen.

N n *N n*

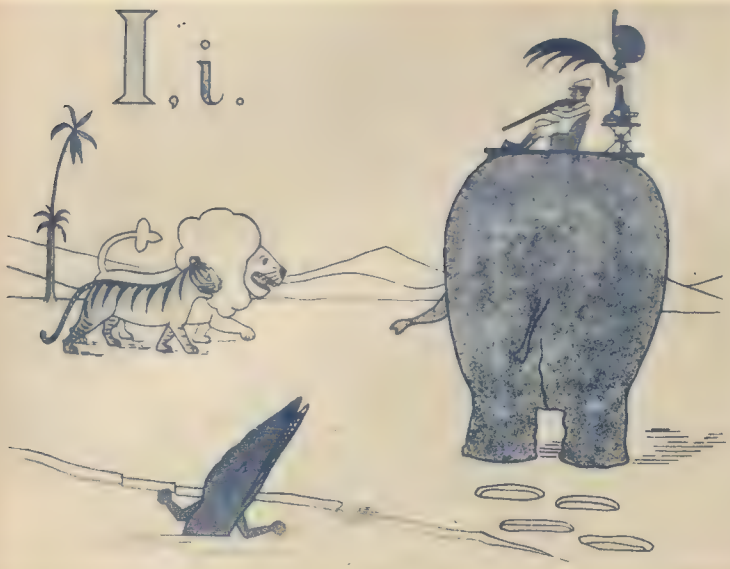
N is the Navy
We keep at Spithead,
It's a sight that makes foreigners
Wish they were dead.

N, n.

HER MAJESTY'S MINISTERS.

Her Majesty's Ministers,
Tory or Whig,
Must always be those
Who will keep
England big.

I. i.

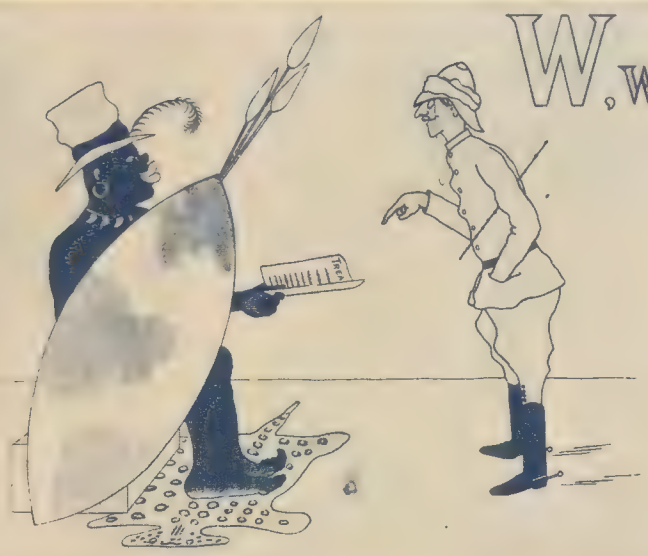


I i *I i*

I is for India,
Our land in the East
Where everyone goes
To shoot tigers, and feast.

W w *W w*

W is the Word
Of an Englishman true:
When given, it means
What he says, he will do.



W. W.

"The White Man's Burden," written in 1899, is another Kipling poem recalling the imperialist power – in this case America about to take over the Philippines – to a sense of the duties and responsibilities, as well as the economic rewards, that possession of an Empire imposes on the rulers as well as the ruled:

Take up the White Man's burden –
Send forth the best ye breed –
To bind your sons to exile
To serve your captive's need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild –
Your new caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

The poem also points out, in a timely reminder, that the real rewards of Empire are the satisfaction of doing one's duty, while bearing "the blame of those ye better / the hate of those ye guard."

That Kipling was not a complete jingoist is also evident from "The Flag of his Country", a story in *Stalky & Co.*, which describes a British schoolboy's reactions to patriotic propaganda. When an "impeccable Conservative M.P." lectures the College on the subject of patriotism he is described by Stalky as "a jelly-bellied flag-flapper" who "profaned the most secret places of their souls with outcries and gesticulation." There is little doubt that, in this ferocious characterization, Kipling was speaking with his own voice. The author of *Kim*, who could so readily identify with the native consciousness as to describe their disrespectful attitudes to the British set above them in authority was hardly likely to be taken in by myopic tub-thumping imperialism.

Kipling's imperialism was based on his profound conviction that the sacrifices and responsibilities that ruling imposed on the rulers helped to form the character of the British élite. This led in turn to less admirable political implications. Faith in the British Empire and in the corps of disciplined hierarchical, dedicated and hard-working officials he had met as a journalist in the India of the 1880s, convinced him of the British right to rule and strengthened him in his opposition in later life to modern, urbanized, democratic, liberal society.

Apart from Kipling, "the banjo bard of Empire," poetry celebrating the achievements of the British Empire was generally conspicuous by its utter banality and poverty of imagination.

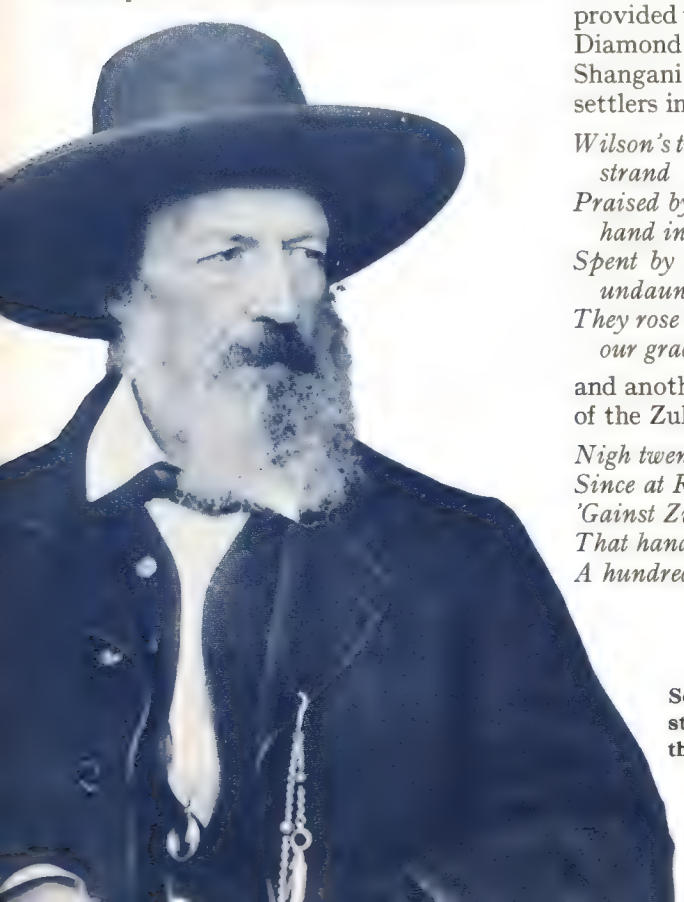
The effect of using poetry to express political convictions was disastrous. Even Tennyson and Swinburne produced inferior verse when they turned their pens to patriotic themes.

By far the most damaging examples of patriotic verse were those produced deliberately to celebrate a British victory in a far-away colonial war. Some of the poems rivalled those of William McGonnigall, the 19th-Century poet whose appalling efforts have in recent years won him popularity as the world's worst versifier. A certain H.T.Rhoades, for instance, provided this contribution on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on the subject of the Shangani patrol, a last stand of white settlers in the Matabele war of 1892:

Wilson's troopers at bay on the far Shangani strand
Praised by their savage foes, who told how, hand in hand
Spent by the hopeless fight, but with still undaunted mien
They rose and sang as they died: "God save our gracious Queen."

and another hack, Ernest Pertwee, wrote of the Zulu Wars:

Nigh twenty years have passed away
Since at Rorke's Drift, in iron mood,
'Gainst Zulu fire and assegai
That handful of our soldiers stood;
A hundred men that place to guard!
Their officers Bromhead and Chard.



Some academics consider Alfred Tennyson's stirring patriotic odes his worst poetry, but they greatly increased his readership.

Poet Laureate Alfred Austin said all great poems combine religion and patriotism.

The floods of clichés and stale metaphors that commemorated imperial events were even assiduously collected together for children in works like the *Empire Reciter*, which was published by the Sunday School Union in 1898.

One of the best-known hacks was W.E. Henley, a distinguished man of letters and pillar of the Savile Club. Though a cripple, he was a peculiarly Johnsonian figure, corpulent, robust and emotional. W.B.Yeats claimed that through the propaganda vehicles of his weekly *Scots Observer* (later the *National Observer*) and the magazine *Sphere*, Henley converted the young men at Oxford and Cambridge into imperialists. Henley himself had become an imperialist through the influence of two men: Walter Blaikie, a one-time railway engineer in India and a partner in the firm that printed the *Scots Observer*, and Rudyard Kipling, whose *Barrack Room Ballads* Henley was the first to publish.

His reputation as a poet tends to rest on his poetry about stoical sick and wounded – "bloody but unbowed" – collected together as *In Hospital*. In 1892 he edited a collection of patriotic verses for boys, *Lyrica Heroica*, which the *Saturday Review* welcomed favourably as "a very fine book, which will, we hope, help to keep the blood of many English

boys from the wretched and morbid stagnation of modernity."

Henley was "knocked speechless with wrath and amazement" at the British reverses during the Boer War; "Remonstrance," written in December, 1899, after the "Black Week" when the Boers, under their leader Paul Kruger, were scoring brilliant victories, scorned the British for their feebleness:

Hitch, blunder, check –
Each is a new disaster,
And it is who shall bleat and scrawl
The feebler and the faster
Where is our ancient pride of heart?
Our faith in blood and star?
Who would but marvel how we came
If this is all we are?
Ours is the race
That tore the Spaniard's ruff
That flung the Dutchman by the breech
The Frenchman by the scruff;
Through his diurnal round of dawns
Our drum-tap squires the sun;
And yet, an old mad burgher man
Can put us on the run!

Henry Newbolt was another public poet who had a passing popularity. Cricket, boxing, and soldiering were all part of the same healthy public school game for Newbolt, exemplified in collections such as *The Island Race* of 1898 and *Songs of the Sea* (1904). "Play up! play up! and play the game!" was the rallying cry from the poem "Vitai Lampada" – in which the Henty-type schoolboy hero graduates from playing cricket to war in the desert. Newbolt echoes the popular patriotism of the day:

England! where the sacred flame
Burns before the inmost shrine,
Where the lips that love thy name
Consecrate their hopes and thine,
Where the banners of thy dead
Weave their shadows overhead,
Watch beside thine arms tonight,
Pray that God defend the Right.

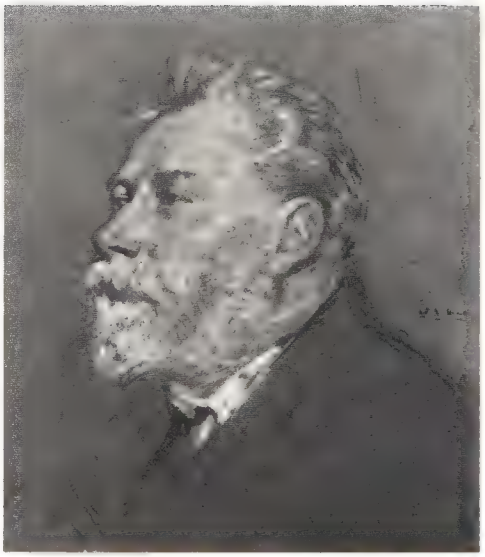
Sir Henry Newbolt was labelled a "nautical Kipling" for poems like "Drake's Drum."

Another imperialist poet, cast in the same romantic-nostalgic Tory mould as Henley and Newbolt, was the diminutive Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate from 1896 until his death in 1913. Austin gave up an unsuccessful legal career on inheriting a private fortune, became a political journalist for the Tory *Standard* and stood twice for Parliament as a Conservative, helping to found and edit the Tory *National Review*.

When the Poet Laureate, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, died in 1892 his reputation had become so hallowed that no one seemed fit to succeed to the post. For four years the post remained vacant. But Austin a supremely vain man, had no qualms about his suitability. Alfred the Great, ran a contemporary joke, had given way to Alfred the Little.

Austin was soon nicknamed the "Hysterical Helot of Imperialism," an epithet whose origin becomes clear upon reading his poem on the Jameson Raid, which appeared in *The Times* a few days after his appointment as Laureate. The poem is a tribute, in the familiar swinging ballad rhythms used so successfully by Kipling, to Dr. Leander Starr Jameson whose ill-fated attempt to take over the Transvaal in 1895 helped to precipitate the Boer War a few years later:

Let lawyers and statesmen addle
Their pates over points of law:
If sound be our sword and saddle
And gun-gear, who cares one straw?
When men of our own blood pray us
To ride to our kinfolk's aid,
Not Heaven itself shall stay us
From the rescue they call a raid.



W.E.Henley led a literary counter-movement against late 19th-Century "decadents."

In this instance, the poem was not even politically acceptable: Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister who had appointed Austin, condemned the raid as an act of war and was severely embarrassed by his protégé's romantic jingoism.

The same hackneyed themes constantly reappear in Austin's patriotic verse. In "Pax Britannica," for instance, first published in *The Times* in 1898, England's shore-line inspires the similes "rolling ramparts" and "moated by her main," and the British lion actually stirs from his bed "crisps his mane" and growls, "where are my foes?" Such verse was generally recognized as mediocre. In 1902 there appeared a droll parody on "Pax Britannica":

Then A-st-n tried his Laureate hand:
The Lion oped his jaws,
Stiffened his mane, as usual, and
Did something with his claws,
But though each anatomic part
So loyally behaved,
My yet more patriotic heart
Still fresh gymnastics craved.

Parodies of Austin's poetry, indeed, abounded in the 1890s. *Punch* seeming to take great delight in puncturing Austin's more outrageous pretensions, particular emphasis being given to his repeated omission from the New Year's Honours List and his fondness for using cumbersome Latin phrases in his poetry.

EMPIRE IN THE LIMELIGHT

During Victoria's reign the theatre shed its old reputation for rowdy unrespectability and became increasingly popular as a source of entertainment for all classes of Englishmen. Its glittering heyday coincided with that of the British Empire at the end of the century, and theatrical entrepreneurs were quick to see that productions with an imperial flavour could be highly profitable. In both music-hall and straight drama, colonies and conquest became fashionable subjects for which the lower orders of theatre-goers would queue for hours – even if the top-hatted, silk-gowned upper class continued its tradition of arriving late and leaving early, squeezing the show in between a Belgravia dinner and a Mayfair supper.

In the Empire

In a private box a Victorian belle could display her charms without losing her reputation.

London theatre owners strove for grand interiors

Theatre, prostitutes mingle with gentry.

The working class crowded the balcony of the Victoria Theatre for Saturday night music-hall.

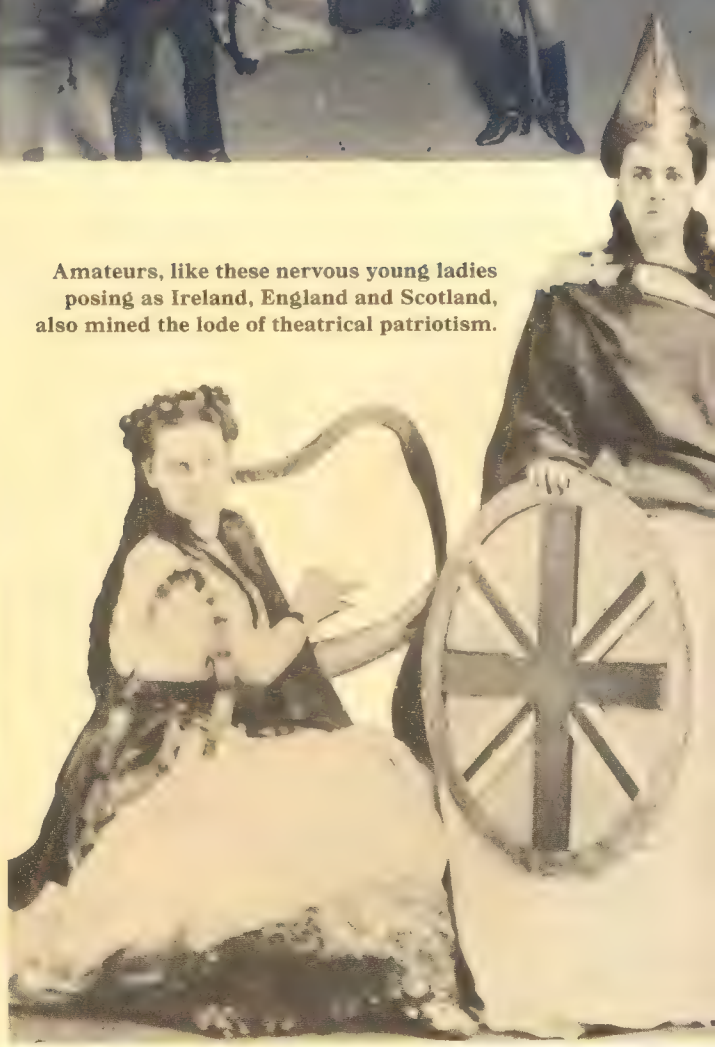
befitting an imperial capital. This is the Haymarket in 1899.

In its programmes, the Empire Theatre exploited patriotic themes.

East of Suez in the West End

If the British public could not go to see the Empire their country dominated, theatrical producers would bring the Empire to the British public. Canada's wild North-West Territories, an Arabian bazaar, the Chinese Celestial Empire: no locale was too exotic to be reproduced on a London stage. Sets and costumes might occasionally stray from authenticity, but few playgoers had the first-hand experience to know the difference. They relished the opportunity of an imaginary visit to foreign climes for the price of a seat in the Gods, and if it included some sniggers at lesser (i.e. non-British) breeds, all the better. The musical comedy *San Toy* – as its programme (bottom right) shows – even managed to squeeze laughs from the "Chinese" names of its characters – Sing Hi, Li Lo, and Hu You. This kind of humour may seem weak today, but *San Toy* played 768 performances in an era when four months was considered a long and profitable run.

Lewis Waller portrayed Alexander Mackenzie in a play about the Canadian explorer.



Amateurs, like these nervous young ladies posing as Ireland, England and Scotland, also mined the lode of theatrical patriotism.

The rage for imperial settings meant heavy use of make-up to give pale-faced British actors the dark complexions of the subject races, as in this scene from *Belle of Cairo* in 1896.

Rutland Barrington (above left) played a suitably glowering Mandarin and Hayden Coffin (above right) an appropriately clear-eyed Englishman in the smash hit, *San Toy*. Producer George Edwardes, whose second passion was racing, was so pleased with the play's success that he named a horse *San Toy*.

DALY'S THEATRE,

SOLE PROPRIETOR ... ... Mr. GEORGE EDWARDES.

To-Night, and Every Evening at 8.15, Matinee every Saturday at 2.30,
An entirely New and Original Musical Play, in Two Acts, entitled

SAN TOY,

OR, THE EMPEROR'S OWN.

Book by EDWARD MORTON. Lyrics by HARRY GREENBANK & ADRIAN ROSS. Music by SIDNEY JONES.

Li ... (British Consul at Pynka Pong) ... Mr. HUNTLEY WRIGHT
Sir Bingo Preston ... (President of the Board of Ceremonies) ... Mr. FRED KAYE
Sing Hi ... Mr. AKERMAN MAY
Lieut. Harvey Tucker ... (a Chinese Student) ... Mr. ERNEST SNOW
Fo Hop ... Mr. SCOTT RUSSELL
Hu Pi, Wai Ho, Li Hi, Li Lo ... (Jewellers of Pynka Pong) ... Mr. J. MURPHY, Mr. S. ARRIGONI, Mr. T. H. DAVID, Mr. F. VIGAY
The Emperor ... (Tartar Guards) ... Mr. COLIN COOP

Yen How ... Mr. RUTLAND BARRINGTON
Poppy ... AND ... Miss HILDA MOODY
Rose Tucker ... (a Mandarin) ... Mr. RUTLAND BARRINGTON
Dudley ... (Daughter of Sir Bingo) ... Miss BLANCHE MASSEY
Wun Lung ... Miss GRACIE LEIGH
Ko Fan ... (Maid) ... Miss GLADYS HOMFREY
Trixie ... Miss MAIDIE HOPE
Yung Shi, Me Koui, Siou, Shuey Pin Sing, Li Kiang ... (Six Little Wives of Yen How) ... Miss KITTY MASON, Miss AILEEN D'ORME, Miss MARIE FAWCETT, Miss MARGUERITE ROCHE, Miss M. DARRELL, Miss FLORENCE ALLEN, Miss MARY COLLETTE, Miss ALICE DAVIS, Miss K. FRANCIS, Miss AIDA CARTER, Miss HILDA CORAL
Hu You ... (Perpetual Corporal of the Emperor's Own) ...
Miss Harley Streeter ... (of the Emperor's Own) ...
Hon Mrs. Hay Stackporle ... (with Pas Seul in Act II.) ...
Miss Mary Lambkin ...
Lady Pickleton ...

Captain Bobby Preston ... (Son of Sir Bingo Preston) ... Mr. HAYDEN COFFIN
San Toy ... (Daughter of Yen How) ... Miss FLORENCE COLLINGBOURN

Act I. ... A STREET IN PYNKA PONG. *Hawes Craven*
Act II. ... HALL IN EMPEROR'S IMPERIAL PALACE AT PEKIN. *Joseph Harker*

The Words of the Song "Tommy Atkins," in the Second Act, are by Mr. HARRY HAMILTON.
Additional Musical Numbers by Mr. LIONEL MONCKTON.
Chinese Ladies' Costumes by Miss FISHER. Gentlemen's by B. J. SIMMONS & Co. Gentlemen's Costumes by COOLING & LAWRENCE.
Hats by RETTA, 8, Old Cavendish Street, W. English Ladies' Costumes by
Shoes by SKELLY. Electrical Engineer, G. A. POYNTON. Machinist, H. SHELDON.
Wigs by CLARKSON. Floral Decorations by A. GATTI & Co.
The Dances arranged by Mr. WILLIE WARDE.
... Manager ... Mr. E. B. NORMAN

II. Awakening to Imperial Reality

As opposed to the novels and poems written in Britain mainly for home consumption, there was one wholly imperial literary genre – the Anglo-Indian novel – written by the men and women who actually lived in India. Far more than those works concerned to propagandize the virtues of the Empire from the comfort of Home, the Anglo-Indian novels reflect the realities of imperial problems, often tellingly revealing the attitudes of the Anglo-Indian towards Empire, "native" India and their own relationship to it.

The dominant theme of these books is the relationship between the races. In the way they deal with this theme, the novels dramatically reflect the change from British self-confidence to doubt as the tide of Indian nationalism rose.

When the Indian Empire seemed secure, Indians were seen in these novels to live largely on the approbation of their immediate white superiors and to know their "station" in life – which they willingly accept without demur. This gap is totally unbridgable, either through education or love.

Western education does the Indian more harm than good in these novels – it leaves them poised between two worlds, either petty troublemakers or tragic, insecure characters lacking a sense of racial or cultural identity.

This lack of identity presented a rare opportunity for humour to the *Punch* contributor Anstey Guthrie. His Bengali Babu series of Hurry Bungsho Jabberjee stories, published in 1897, make heavy-handed fun at the expense of the semi-educated Babu's malapropisms. (Guthrie, incidentally, never even visited India.) Besides this, Anglo-Indian novels were short on humour, though long on atmosphere.

The harsh and weighted image of the educated Indian in fiction symbolized the dilemma facing them in reality: if the Indian did not become Westernized then he was "uncivilized" and "inferior," but if he tried to model himself on the British he was "aping his betters," had lost his native integrity, and was still "inferior." There is always present, if only by implication, a sense of the beneficence of the British Raj and the necessity for Indians to accept a subordinate role within that structure imposed upon them by white rule.

This comes out strongly whenever the subject of an inter-racial love affair arises. In no way, whether for cultural or racial reasons, did the British see intermarriage as a solution to the problem of Anglo-Indian relations. The solution generally offered to love across religious, racial and cultural barriers in Anglo-Indian novels and stories, like Kipling's "Without Benefit of Clergy" in *Life's Handicap*, is that the Indian woman, never the English man, must die and their offspring must not be allowed to survive.

Perhaps the best known of the 19th-Century Anglo-Indian novelists was Flora Annie Steel (1847–1927) who was, in her day, compared favourably with Kipling. In 1867, at the age of 20, she married a member of the Indian Civil Service and in the following year came out with him to India. Most of her time was spent in the Punjab where she advocated education for Indian women. She was, in fact, the first inspector of girls' schools and in 1884 became a member of the Provincial Educational Board (along with William Lockhart Kipling, Rudyard's father). In 1889, upon her husband's retirement, she returned to England but, in order to do research for her famous novel of the Indian Mutiny, *On the Face of the Waters*, she went back to India to talk with the surviving members of the Mughal nobility who had led the uprising.

Mrs. Steel tackled the theme of race-relations through the explosive subject of miscegenation. *The Hosts of the Lord*, published in 1900, deals with, and to some extent identifies with, a Europeanized Muslim, Roshan Khan, whose atavistic racial intolerance comes to the surface when an Englishman, Captain Dering, courts the beautiful Eurasian Laila and threatens to lure her away from her rightful place in the native caste structure. Roshan thinks of the Englishman, "guzzling swine's flesh and bibbing wine" while "that faint amaze at the presence in his own mind of such antiquated half-forgotten ideas assailed him again at this point." Mrs. Steel seems to be arguing that a Western veneer of civilization can only partially hide racial drives that will emerge and take command in a crisis.

Other authors who wrote about India were legion. In the 19th Century, they were often women – Alice Perrin, Ethel M. Dell, Ethil Savi, Maud Diver are the best known – while in the 20th Century, writers of the stature of Somerset Maugham, Nevil Shute, H.E.Bates, Paul Scott, John Masters, Leonard Woolf and George Orwell have all dealt with Indian or Burmese themes in their fiction.

The most famous exponent of the Anglo-Indian novel is E.M.Forster in his *Passage to India*, which is worth dealing with at more length because of its significance in asking basic questions about the relations between British and Indians – and not finding any answers.

From the 1920s onwards, the image of India in the British imagination came to be dominated by the theme of mutual misunderstanding between the two races, and it reaches a literary culmination in Forster's disturbing metaphysical novel. Forster had served as a private secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas in 1921. He recounted his experiences in *The Hill of Devi*, and used many of these episodes in *A Passage to India*, which was written three years later.

Whereas in the 19th Century writers suggested that everything worked better so long as the races kept their distance, Forster wrote about a struggle for intimacy between men that was obstructed and heightened by race. It is also, in the end a paradoxical and self-defeating struggle: to attempt mutual understanding implies becoming immersed in a foreign culture . with the concomitant danger, as Forster was aware, of losing something of one's own sense of identity.

The problem of personal relations between the races, in the context of two mutually exclusive cultures, becomes *the* problem in Forster's bitter-sweet work. Time-conscious Western rationalism is set against the unconscious serenity of Eastern mysticism. British political reforms clash with the Indian need for racial tolerance. In many ways, Forster suggests that the relationship between British and Indians is similar to a love affair: for it to succeed, the British had to give, and the Indians receive, love and

continued on p. 1540

The World of the "Baboo"

While some serious authors explored the problems of the Anglo-Indian relationship, others made what capital they could from popular prejudice. Humourist Thomas Anstey Guthrie (who used the pseudonym, F. Anstey) exploited widely held British contempt for the Babu, any Indian who dared to suppose his superficial education equipped him to aspire to English culture, or even to speak the English language properly. In the person of "Hurry Bungsho Jabberjee, B.A., Calcutta University," Guthrie used stilted syntax and a running string of malapropisms to achieve a style of writing roughly equivalent to a modern comedian's Indian accent for a take-off of immigrants.

These drawings illustrated Guthrie's novel, *A Bayard from Bengal*, in which "Jabberjee" described the "Magnificent and Spanking Career of Chunder Bindabun Bhosh, Esq., B.A., Cambridge." ("Jabberjee" apologized to the reader for the fact that the "Indian" artist – in reality Bernard Partridge – "may not possess sufficient familiarity with the customs and solecisms" of England to avoid such mistakes as putting monkeys in the British landscape.)

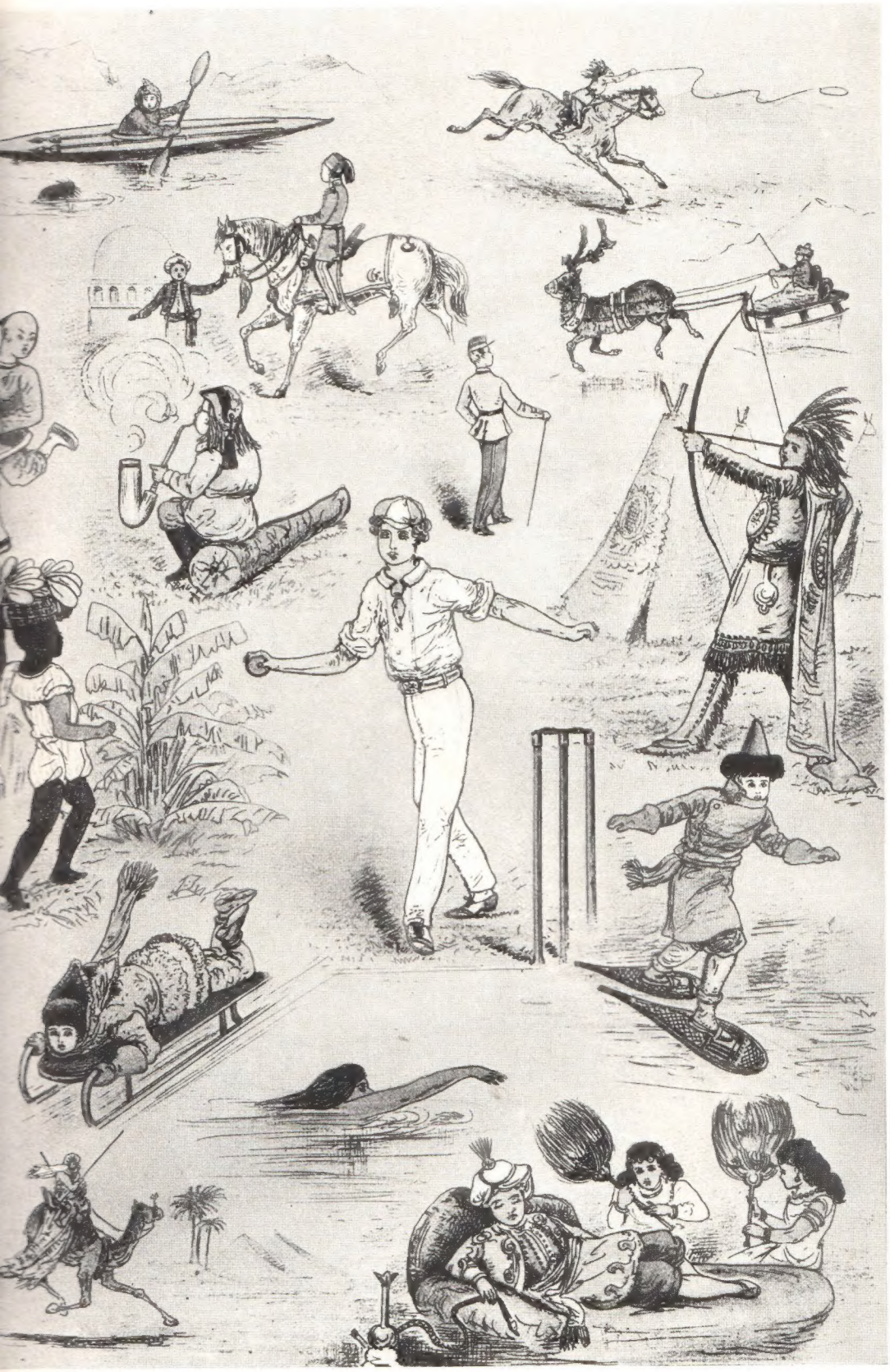
At Cambridge, Mr. Bhosh burned "his midnight candle at both ends" and one day rescued a "beauteous maiden" from a cow, simply by running away. The animal stopped chasing the girl in order to pursue Bhosh, who "took the flying leap into the shop of a cheese merchant, where he cleverly entrenched himself behind the receipt of custom."

Later, in London, Bhosh "occasionally figured as the gay dog in upper-class societies, and was not long in winning a reputation in smart circles as a champion bounder." He found himself resisting the advances of a duchess, like "Simpson with Delilah," and "assuring his dukeship that he by no means reciprocated the lady's sentiments, and delicately recommending that he was to keep a rather more lynxlike eye in future upon her proceedings. To which the Duke, greatly agitated, replied that he was unspeakably obliged for the caution and requested Mr. Bhosh to depart at once and remain an absentee for the future." After blundering through a series of such adventures in "London and suburban society" (to give Guthrie his due, English characters and institutions get their share of lampooning also), the Babu hero wins the Derby on a milkman's cart-horse, and, "now rolling on cash . . . contracted holy matrimony" with the girl he saved from the cow, living "in great splendour at Shepherd's Bush" with his wife and "their blooming progenies."

On a fox hunt, the Babu feels he has earned the "heartfelt thanks of his fellow Nimrods" by bravely confronting the quarry with a hunting knife and frightening it away.

While riding with fashionable London in Hyde Park's Rotten Row, Bhosh is surprised when his "unwieldy steed came prematurely to a halt and adopted an unruly deportment."

Duelling, Mr. Bhosh shoots a hole through the hat of his opponent's second, who, the novel's "author" complains, "ought not to have been drawn in a sun-helmet."



kindness. It was not so impractical an idea as it may sound: when Forster was in India, Rev. Charles Freer Andrews, author of several books on Gandhi, wrote a memorandum dealing with the 1921 Indian railway strike in which he stressed "the need for direct human contact and personal friendliness between managers and men." The trouble was that there was not enough love.

One incident in *A Passage to India* has puzzled commentators ever since: the scene in the Marabar Caves. In these caves, mysterious and significant in a way never made clear, the Englishwoman, Miss Quested, guided by the Indian, Aziz, is overcome by a nameless dread, flees and by implication then accuses Aziz of molesting her. The incident ends the possibility of real friendship between Aziz and the Englishman, Fielding. Virginia Woolf thought the caves represented the soul of India; certainly, the inability of the European characters in the novel to understand them is crucial to their failure to penetrate the Indian mind. Friendship is difficult enough to achieve under any circumstances, implies Forster, but it is made even more difficult in India where racial, imperial and communal tensions seem to make personal relations virtually impossible. Forster's answer to the possibility of good relations between the races is "No, not yet," and "No, not here," a despairing answer that would have been totally out of place only 20 years before and one that points, in emotional and literary terms, towards the final break between the races when the Raj ended 20 years later.

So in the end, the crude, self-confident masculine writing of the heyday of imperialism gave way to the sophisticated pessimism of its decline. The introspective sensitivity of later writers to the consequences of imperial rule set the mood for Britain's abdication from Empire after 1945; confident rule became untenable once the imperial race accepted its subjects on human terms as equals.

This "boys of all nations" tableau, published in the *Union Jack* in 1881, sees cricket, that character-forming activity, as the traditional occupation of the English schoolboy.

Sergeant, Grenadier Guards, 1910